

**Amendments to the Claims**

1-11. (Cancelled)

12. (Currently Amended) An amidated pectin prepared by a process comprising:

contacting a starting pectin material with a bio-catalyst capable of de-esterifying the starting pectin material to produce a de-esterified pectin having a degree of esterification ranging from 60% to 30% and a molecular weight greater than the molecular weight of a de-esterified pectin prepared by acid or alkali hydrolysis of the starting pectin material, wherein the de-esterified pectin is characterized by having a ratio, R, of molecular weight of the starting pectin material to the molecular weight of the de-esterified pectin up to 1.15, and

contacting the de-esterified pectin with ammonia to produce an amidated pectin,

wherein the amidated pectin is characterized by having a ratio, R<sub>2</sub>, of intrinsic viscosity of the de-esterified pectin to the intrinsic viscosity of the amidated pectin ranging from 1.01 to 1.15.

13. (Previously Presented) The amidated pectin of claim 12, characterized by having a ratio, R<sub>2</sub>, of intrinsic viscosity of the de-esterified pectin to the intrinsic viscosity of the amidated pectin ranging from 1.03 to 1.15.

14. (Previously Presented) The amidated pectin of claim 12, characterized by having a ratio, R<sub>2</sub>, of intrinsic viscosity of the de-esterified pectin to the intrinsic viscosity of the amidated pectin ranging from 1.04 to 1.15.

15. (Previously Presented) The amidated pectin of claim 12, characterized by having a degree of esterification of 30% or less and a degree of amidation of 18% or less.

16. (Previously Presented) The amidated pectin of claim 12, characterized by having a degree of esterification of 10-20% and a degree of amidation of 10-20%.
17. (Previously Presented) The amidated pectin of claim 12, characterized by having a degree of esterification of 12-18% and a degree of amidation of 5-30%.
18. (Previously Presented) The amidated pectin of claim 12, characterized by displaying a Mark-Houwink factor, "a", above 0.8.
19. (Previously Presented) The amidated pectin of claim 12, characterized by displaying a Mark-Houwink factor, "a", in the range 0.8-1.0.
20. (Previously Presented) The amidated pectin of claim 12, characterized by displaying a Mark-Houwink factor, "a", in the range 0.85-0.95.
21. (Previously Presented) A foodstuff comprising an amidated pectin according to claim 12.
22. (Previously Presented) The foodstuff of claim 21, wherein the foodstuff is a jam or jelly.
23. (Previously Presented) The foodstuff of claim 21, wherein the foodstuff is a dairy product.
24. (Withdrawn -- Previously Presented) A pharmaceutical product comprising an amidated pectin according to claim 12.
25. (Withdrawn -- Previously Presented) A personal care product comprising an amidated pectin according to claim 12.

26. (Withdrawn -- Previously Presented) A household product comprising an amidated pectin according to claim 12.

27. (Cancelled)

28. (Currently Amended) An amidated pectin obtainable from a de-esterified pectin having a degree of esterification ranging from 60% to 30% and a molecular weight greater than the molecular weight of a de-esterified pectin prepared by acid hydrolysis or alkali hydrolysis, wherein the de-esterified pectin is characterized by having a ratio, R, of molecular weight of the starting pectin material to the molecular weight of the de-esterified pectin up to 1.15, and wherein the amidated pectin is characterized by having a ratio, R<sub>2</sub>, of intrinsic viscosity of the de-esterified pectin to the intrinsic viscosity of the amidated pectin ranging from 1.01 to 1.15.

29. (Previously Presented) The amidated pectin of claim 28, characterized by having a ratio, R<sub>2</sub>, of intrinsic viscosity of the de-esterified pectin to the intrinsic viscosity of the amidated pectin ranging from 1.03 to 1.15.

30. (Previously Presented) The amidated pectin of claim 28, characterized by having a ratio, R<sub>2</sub>, of intrinsic viscosity of the de-esterified pectin to the intrinsic viscosity of the amidated pectin ranging from 1.04 to 1.15.

31. (Previously Presented) The amidated pectin of claim 28, characterized by having a degree of esterification of 30% or less and a degree of amidation of 18% or less.

32. (Previously Presented) The amidated pectin of claim 28, characterized by having a degree of esterification of 10-20% and a degree of amidation of 10-20%.

33. (Previously Presented) The amidated pectin of claim 28, characterized by having a degree of esterification of 12-18% and a degree of amidation of 5-30%.
34. (Previously Presented) The amidated pectin of claim 28, characterized by displaying a Mark-Houwink factor, "a", above 0.8.
35. (Previously Presented) The amidated pectin of claim 28, characterized by displaying a Mark-Houwink factor, "a", in the range 0.8-1.0.
36. (Previously Presented) The amidated pectin of claim 28, characterized by displaying a Mark-Houwink factor, "a", in the range 0.85-0.95.